



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Media Release

Monday, 16 December 2024

Genevieve Phillips awarded New Colombo Plan Scholarship

The University of Notre Dame Australia congratulates committed law and arts student Genevieve Phillips for being awarded a prestigious 2025 New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

The scholarship will allow Genevieve to spend a year studying at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and a semester studying at the National University of Samoa. She will also complete internships in both countries.

Genevieve's passion for learning more about the life, history and native cultures of the Indo-Pacific was sparked by a Notre Dame immersion experience in Cambodia earlier this year.

After spending time with her Cambodian peers learning about their different cultures, she realised her perspective on the way of life in Cambodia had completely changed.

Genevieve said this trip helped her appreciate the immense value of immersing herself in other cultures.

"I realised what I could get out of going on these trips and it gave me such a massive sense of fulfillment that I thought, 'this is what I want to do'," she said.

"I am so excited to learn – I just love it. I think there's something really special in spending time in one place and getting to talk to and learn from the local people.

"It was through this experience that I became fully aware of how valuable the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program is in educating students in a unique and positive way by fully immersing them in cultures which are often misrepresented or misunderstood."

The New Colombo Plan is an Australian Government initiative that aims to lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific by supporting undergraduate students to undertake study, language training and internships in the region.

Genevieve said she hoped to make lifelong personal connections with the people of Fiji and Samoa and to build long-term relationships with organisations that have links with Australia.

"I hope to aid in their education of the Indo-Pacific, looking past the tourism sector and deeper into what each country has to offer on a personal and global scale," she said.

Genevieve is studying a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts (History) on Notre Dame's Sydney Campus, both of which tap into her key interest in international relations.

She is a dedicated and passionate student who was last year awarded a Letter of Appreciation in recognition of her hard work and dedication to her studies.

Genevieve has spent the past two weeks in Rome as part of a Notre Dame core unit pilgrimage elective, where she has visited churches and other significant religious sites, attended a mass led by Pope Francis at the Vatican and had dinner with Australia's new Cardinal, Mykola Bychok.

"I want to thank Notre Dame for giving me these sensational, life-changing opportunities, one after another, and for allowing me to study overseas, as well as thank my references Karen McCluskey and Nigel Edwards," she said.

"I'm going into my third year and I have been fortunate enough to go to Cambodia, Italy, France and now Fiji and Samoa – all as part of my degree."

Outside university, Genevieve has been the leader of the second violins with BlueScope Youth Orchestra for several years. She is a mentor for her high school St Mary's Star of the Sea and has been a youth mentor for upcoming musicians in Greece, Bali and New Zealand.

Genevieve said her advice to other students would be to keep an open mind to studying abroad in lesser-known destinations, and to apply for every opportunity that came their way.

Media contact: media@nd.edu.au